

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

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TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

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SUBJ: U.S. ASSISTANCE TO GVN POLICE

1. THERE FOLLOWS TEXT OF SEYMOUR HERSH ARTICLE DATED
WASHINGTON SEPTEMBER 15 WHICH CARRIED IN NEW YORK TIMES
SEPTEMBER 16 AND RECEIVED WIDE PLAY THROUGHOUT COUNTRY.
BEGIN TEXT

SENATE LIBERALS WILL OPPOSE AID TO SAIGON POLICE

THIEU'S CRITICS CHARGE THAT JAILING AND TORTURING OF
POLITICAL FOES CONTINUE

FLOOR FIGHT IS PLANNED.

BROAD BACKING SEEN FOR BID TO DELETE THE SUPPORT FROM
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FOREIGN ASSISTANCE BILL.

SENATE LIBERALS ARE PLANNING A MAJOR FLOOR FIGHT TO
DELETE ALL SUPPORT FOR SOUTH VIETNAM'S POLICE FORCE AND
PRISON SYSTEM FROM THE PENDING FOREIGN AID BILL.

THE SENATORS SAY THAT THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS COVERED UP THE FULL EXTENT OF UNITED STATES AID FOR SOUTH VIETNAM'S POLICE FORCE, WHICH, CRITICS CONTEND, IS STILL JAILING

AND TORTURING POLITICAL OPPONENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU.

A QUIET LOBBYING EFFORT - THE LEGISLATION, WHICH NOW PROVIDES FOR DOLS 376-MILLION IN LOCAL ECONOMIC AID FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA--LESS THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THE DOLS 632-MILLION INITIALLY SOUGHT BY THE ADMINISTRATION--IS SCHEDULED FOR A SENATE VOTE LATE NEXT WEEK.

SINCE EARLY SUMMER, SENATE SOURCES SAID, A QUIET BUT INTENSIVE LOBBYING EFFORT AGAINST FURTHER ECONOMIC AID FOR POLICE ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH VIETNAM HAS BEEN WAGED BY A NUMBER OF ANTIWAR AND CHURCH GROUPS, INCLUDING THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. ONE SENATE AIDE SAID THAT A RECENT COUNT INDICATED THAT AS MANY AS 35 SENATORS HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN DELETING SUCH SUPPORT FROM THE BILL.

OBFUSCATION CHARGED - MOST OF THE SENATORS WHO OPPOSED THE VIETNAM WAR ARE EXPECTED TO SUPPORT THE MEASURE. THESE INCLUDE REPUBLICAN SENATORS CLIFFORD P. CASE OF NEW JERSEY, AND CHARLES MCC MATHIAS JR., OF MARYLAND; DEMOCRATIC SENATORS EDWARD M. KENNEDY OF MASSACHUSETTS, VANCE HARTKE OF INDIANA, ALAN CRANSTON OF CALIFORNIA, FRANK CHURCH OF IDAHO, GEORGE S. MCGOVERN OF SOUTH DAKOTA, PHILIP A. HART OF MICHIGAN AND EDMUND S. MUSKIE OF MAINE.

"WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A HELL OF A SPIRITED DEBATE ON THIS BECAUSE WE'VE HAD INDICATIONS THAT DIFFERENT SENATORS WANT TO GET UP AND SPEAK ON IT," SAID SENATOR JAMES ABOURZEK, A FRESHMAN DEMOCRAT FROM SOUTH DAKOTA WHO HAS BEEN ACTIVELY OPPOSING THE CONTINUED POLICE AID.
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IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW TODAY, SENATOR ABOURZEK SAID THAT HE WAS CONCERNED OVER WHAT HE TERMED THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTEMPT TO OBFUSCATE THE PURPOSE OF ITS SUPPORT FOR THE POLICE AND PRISONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

"MAYBE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DON'T HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT TROOP MOVEMENTS OR THE LOCATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS," HE SAID, "BUT BY GOD THEY SURE AS HELL CAN DECIDE WHETHER THEY WANT TO SUPPORT TORTURE OR NOT."

IN JULY, MR. ABOURZEK OFFERED AN AMENDMENT TO THE FOREIGN AID BILL THAT WOULD BAR THE USE OF UNITED STATES FUNDS FOR THE SUPPORT OF ALL POLICE AND PRISON ACTIVITIES "OF ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT OR ANY PROGRAM OF INTERNAL

INTELLIGENCE OR SURVEILLANCE ON BEHALF OF ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT."

PARA LESS SWEEPING AMENDMENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE OFFERED BY OTHER LIBERAL SENATORS WHEN THE BILL GETS TO THE FLOOR, A SENATE SOURCE SAID, AMONG THEM A PROPOSAL BY SENATOR KENNEDY THAT WOULD BAR ANY POLICE AID TO SOUTH VIETNAM, THE PHILIPPINES AND BRAZIL.

"THERE'S MUCH BROADER SUPPORT FOR THIS THAN MOST PEOPLE THINK," SAID DALE S. DEHAAN, A SENIOR KENNEDY AIDE. "IT'S THE LIBERALS BEHIND IT, BUT ON BOTH SIDES OF THE AISLE. THIS IS A BI-PARTISAN ISSUE."

DESPITE THE CONCERN BY SOME SENATORS, THE ISSUE HAS PROVOKED LITTLE PUBLIC INTEREST. IN RECENT MONTHS, SENATOR KENNEDY HAS MADE TWO MAJOR SENATE SPEECHES EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER THE CONTINUED UNITED STATES SUPPORT FOR THE POLICE AND PRISONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, BUT NEITHER RECEIVED MAJOR NEWSPAPER OR TELEVISION ATTENTION.

PASSAGE OF AN ALL-INCLUSIVE AMENDMENT BARRING ECONOMIC AID FOR ANY FOREIGN POLICE FORCE OR PRISON SYSTEM IS VIEWED AS SOURCES SAID, BUT MANY LIBERALS BELIEVE THAT A UNCLASSIFIED

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CUTBACK IN SOUTH VIETNAMESE POLICE AND PRISON SPENDING MAY BE APPROVED, IF THE ISSUE ATTRACTS ENOUGH PUBLIC CONCERN. (AN APPARENT OMISSIONTHIRD LINE THIS PARA).

CRITICS OF THE THIEU GOVERNMENT HAVE ESTIMATED THE NUMBER OF CURRENTLY DETAINED POLITICAL PRISONERS AT BETWEEN 40,000 AND 200,000, ALTHOUGH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY LISTS ONLY 5,081 "CIVILIAN DETAINEES."

IN A LETTER SENT LAST MONTH TO SENATOR KENNEDY, THE STATE DEPARTMENT ESTIMATED THAT THERE "MAY BE BETWEEN 500 AND 1,000 DETAINEES" WHO ARE BEING HELD AS POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

THE LETTER, SIGNED BY W. MARSHALL WRIGHT, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS, DEFENDED THE TREATMENT OF CIVILIAN PRISONERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

IN A REPORT ISSUED IN JULY, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, THE LONDON-BASED RESEARCH GROUP ON POLITICAL PRISONERS, ESTIMATED THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT HAD ARRESTED AT LEAST 70,000 AND POSSIBLY MORE THAN 100,000

PEOPLE AS POLITICAL PRISONERS--MANY OF WHOM SUPPORTED

NEITHER THE GOVERNMENT NOR THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS IN THE WAR.

"THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT TORTURE IS WIDELY USED," AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S REPORT SAID.

FURTHER ALLEGATIONS OF MISTREATMENT WERE MADE AT A HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING THURSDAY BY FRED BRANFMAN, A LEADING WAR CRITIC WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A SEVEN-WEEK VISIT TO SAIGON.

MR. BRANFMAN CHARGED THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE POLICE WERE RECLASSIFYING POLITICAL PRISONERS AS COMMON-LAW CRIMINALS, A CATEGORY NOT COVERED BY THE JANUARY PEACE ACCORD. UNDER THE TERMS OF THAT AGREEMENT, ALL CIVILIAN UNCLASSIFIED

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POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE TO BE RELEASED WITHOUT DELAY.

MR. BRANFMAN, WHO IS CO-DIRECTOR OF THE INDOCHINA RESOURCE CENTER, AN ANTIWAR RESEARCH AND LOBBYING GROUP IN WASHINGTON, ALSO DESCRIBED THE NATIONWIDE SURVEILLANCE THAT HE SAID NOW EXISTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

"I LEARNED IN SAIGON," HE SAID, "THAT ALL VIETNAMESE OVER THE AGE OF 15 ARE REQUIRED TO CARRY I.D. CARDS ON PAIN OF IMPRISONMENT. THESE CARDS ARE LINKED TO A CENTRAL COMPUTER CONTAINING BIO-DOSSIERS OF MORE THAN 10 MILLION VIETNAMESE. EVERY FAMILY IS REQUIRED TO KEEP A "BROWN BOOK" LISTING ALL PEOPLE STAYING IN THEIR HOUSE."

THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, IN ITS INITIAL 1974 BUDGET PRESENTATION TO CONGRESS, MADE BEFORE THE PEACE AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED, OPENLY REQUESTED FUNDS FOR DIRECT SUPPORT OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE NATIONAL POLICE AND THE PRISON SYSTEM.

ONE BUDGET ITEM, SEEKING CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF A NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM, NOTED THAT THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT'S GOAL WAS TO "ESTABLISH, BY THE END OF FISCAL YEAR 1975, A CENTRAL RECORDS SYSTEM CONTAINING 12 MILLION INDIVIDUAL BIO-DATA DOCUMENTS AND 11.5 MILLION DOSSIERS," THE PROJECTS WERE APPROVED BY CONGRESS WITH NO KNOWN PROTESTS.

AFTER THE PEACE ACCORD WAS SIGNED, THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION MADE A SPECIAL PRESENTATION TO CONGRESS ON POSTWAR RECONSTRUCTION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, WHICH PROVIDED THAT THE

A.I.D. POLICE PROJECTS BE TERMINATED. PRESIDENT NIXON'S BUDGET MESSAGE SPECIFICALLY SAID THAT "IN KEEPING WITH

THE ARTICLES OF THE CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT, A.I.D. HAS
TERMINATED ITS ASSISTANCE TO THE NATIONAL POLICE AND TO
THE VIETNAMESE CORRECTIONS SYSTEM." END TEXT.

2. AMBASSADOR MARTIN ASKS THIS BE BROUGHT TO ATTENTION
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OF POLGAR AND ROBINSON. RUSH

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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